

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

CLAIMS

1. Combined gear change and brake control unit for a bicycle comprising,

a support body which can be fastened to the handlebar of the bicycle,

a brake control lever pivotally mounted on the support body around a first axis,

a gear change control unit carried by the support body, comprising a shaft turning around a second axis, either orthogonal or substantially orthogonal to said first axis, in which the shaft carries a pulley on which an end portion of a control cable of a derailleur is destined to be wound, and in which said shaft is subject to a return torque tending to turn the shaft towards a direction in which the cable is released,

a gear change lever arranged behind the brake control lever for controlling the rotation of said shaft in a direction of most winding of the cable and

a button lever arranged on a side of said support body for controlling the rotation of said shaft in the release direction of the cable,

wherein the gear change control unit comprises a ratchet mechanism controlled by said button lever and subject to assuming a home position and an active position, the ratchet mechanism is arranged so to leave the shaft free to turn by a predetermined amplitude in the release direction of the cable, under the action of said return torque following each variation of position of the ratchet mechanism between the home position and the active position, and vice versa.

2. Unit according to claim 1, wherein said ratchet mechanism comprises a gear fastened to the support body with a first and a second meshing unit co-operating with said gear.

3. Unit according to claim 1, wherein said button

lever and said rocker arm are two separate components, oscillating independently with respect to the support body, elastic means being provided to push said button lever towards an end of stroke stop.

By Cont 4. Unit according to claim 2, wherein the first and second meshing unit are arranged so to retain the gear in said release direction of the cable.

5. Unit according to claim 2, wherein said ratchet mechanism comprises elastic means arranged so to push said rocker arm towards said home position.

6. Unit according to claim 2, wherein said gear is equipped with radial teeth and in that said rocker arm is pivotally mounted around an axis, either parallel or substantially parallel to the rotation axis of said shaft.

By Cont 7. Unit according to claim 2, wherein gear is equipped with frontal teeth and wherein said rocker arm is pivotally mounted around an axis, either orthogonal or substantially orthogonal to the rotation axis of said shaft.

8. Unit according to claim 7, wherein said rocker arm is ring-shaped.

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